

Facilitator/Coach Guidelines

MOVE!® Group Sessions

Objectives

- Veteran will achieve at least a 5-10% weight loss.
- Veteran will get 150-300 minutes or more of physical activity per week.

General Guidelines for Leading Group Sessions

Please read this entire set of guidelines before facilitating group sessions.

- The information in these guidelines is intended to serve as a **framework** for the delivery of group sessions.
- The sessions are purposefully not scripted.
- Each facilitator may structure the flow of a session based on coach and participant needs and preferences, ensuring that the content is covered.
- Materials are suggested for each session; however, there is no requirement to use every handout or video listed.
- References and resources will be available online in the future. A notice will be emailed when these are available.

Group Guidance

- Groups offer a supportive environment in which new skills can be introduced, practiced, and reviewed. The skills to be addressed include general problem-solving, resisting temptation, preventing relapse, self-monitoring, and enhancing or making healthy lifestyle choices. In addition, the group format may be useful in reviewing individual progress and goal setting.
- As group leader your role is to facilitate discussion, **not to lecture**. *For example: Instead of listing some of the barriers to physical activity, ask the group to discuss why they may have had difficulty being physically active.* Prepare to evoke as much information as possible from the group. **Solutions and ideas that are generated by the group are much more powerful than those that are taught.**
- The MOVE!® group sessions are designed to facilitate guided discussions but need not be rigidly followed. Groups are like individuals; they often will present with some unique concerns. **Be prepared to “go with the flow” and address the unique concerns of the group rather than insisting on a fixed format.** Rarely do all participants attend every session; thus, consider scheduling approximately 20+ participants to ensure a group size of 15-18 for each session.

- Have the group establish some ground rules at the first session, such as expectations for participation, confidentiality, and respect. Remember that these sessions are not meant to be a therapy group. Redirect personal issues that are not related to weight management when appropriate. If a Veteran needs more time to discuss a non-weight-related issue, offer to speak with him/her after the group.
- A Food and Physical Activity Diary is a useful self-management tool. It is a weekly log in which the Veteran can record that week's food intake on one page and physical activity on another page. There are space limitations to this log; however, a Veteran may choose to make copies of the blank pages. You may suggest that Veterans use an electronic or online log once they complete the group sessions.

General Format

- Each session lasts 60 minutes.
- The ideal group size is 15-18 people, but more participants can be included.
- Participant weigh-in will be as private as possible.
- Late arrivals will be weighed by someone other than the facilitator.
- Ensure that all weights are recorded in the Vital Signs package.
- Food and Activity Diary and homework are reviewed at the beginning of each session. This communicates to participants the importance of self-monitoring.
- Each session will include some type of physical activity. Examples are provided in each session plan.
- Individual consultation, if needed, may be scheduled outside the group session.

Content and format for the 16-session MOVE!® Group series is mainly based on the National Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) and the recently published VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for Screening and Management of Overweight and Obesity. Some of the key points include:

- Having **one** consistent coach for all sessions is critical to participant success.
- Having support and participation from a behavior expert (such as the Health Behavior Coordinator) is important.
- Each series includes a “closed” group of participants (i.e., Veterans start and finish the program together).
- Each series has a fixed start and end date.
- Sessions include nutrition, physical activity, and behavior topics.
- If each facility has 2-4 coaches, at least 4-8 series of 16 sessions can be provided annually. Groups can be staggered, alternating weeks, more than one coach, Tuesday and Thursday, etc.
- In order to keep Veterans motivated who are ready to start MOVE!® group sessions some facilities have established an “orientation” session to fill the gap during the time a series is in progress. This could be scheduled weekly or every 2 weeks. In these sessions, Veterans may be:

- Introduced to some of the key weight management concepts
- Given a Veteran MOVE!® folder with the 11 standard handouts and the Daily Food and Physical Activity Diary, and
- Encouraged to take the MOVE! 11.

This may keep Veterans motivated and engaged until the next series begins.

- Alternatively, some sites may wish to provide more rapid access to MOVE!® by allowing open enrollment on a rolling basis. So, a motivated patient might start at session 3, then cycle through until all 16 have been completed. This works best if the coach is available for an additional 30 minutes after the active group session, to meet with newcomers and help them get oriented, review goals, etc. While this model does not support the same level of group cohesion as the closed group, it can be helpful if sites cannot offer enough staggered sessions to accommodate frequent entry and avoid long wait times for program access.

Special Note: Veterans do not have to have prediabetes or diabetes to participate in MOVE!® Group Sessions.

The following is a list of tasks and responsibilities for planning and facilitating a group:

Planning

- Complete the MOVE!® online training.
- Attend Motivational Interviewing training and Patient Education: TEACH for Success course and be prepared to use the strategies learned.
- Establish a process for scheduling Veterans into the group.
- Schedule a room, if needed, and provide signage and directions.
- Make sure the room can comfortably and safely accommodate your group.
- Establish a private weigh-in area with a scale up to 450 lbs.
- Arrange seating in the room in a circle when possible.
- Ensure that chairs are appropriate for overweight and obese Veterans.
- Have a check-in process.
- Clarify your facility's process for ordering pedometers, odometers, scales, etc.
- Prepare the following materials:
 - MOVE!® Veteran folder with the 11 standard handouts and copies of the Daily Food and Physical Activity Diary.
 - MOVE!® handout booklet, which may be available to order (English and Spanish).
 - Worksheets for all attendees.
 - A pedometer for each Veteran. (If pedometers are provided by your facility, determine and follow Prosthetics guidelines to obtain them. If not, list a few local stores where the Veteran can purchase a pedometer.)

- Pens, pencils, and extra paper.
- A flip chart and/or dry erase board with markers.
- A computer to play videos, if possible.
- Any props designated in the lesson plans.
- Pre-write each session's objectives on flip-chart paper or have them available on PowerPoint.

Facilitator/Coach Tasks

- Coordinate the 16-week series; facilitate the group each week. *DPP critical element: one coordinator throughout the series for rapport, support, and consistency.*
- Educate and promote the MOVE![®] program and recruit participants.
- Contact and schedule speakers as needed.
 - For the first and ongoing sessions, make name tags, if available.
- Use an icebreaker to get started.
 - Options might include inviting participants to:
 - Share something they look forward to after weight loss.
 - Share a success they had in the past in managing weight.
 - Use a 0-10 ruler for how important weight loss is to them (and discuss “why 7 and not 2”...?) and how confident they are that they will be able to lose weight (same follow-up, “why 5 and not 1?”, then “what would help it move up to an 8?”).
 - Print out large 0-10 numbers, post in order around the room, and invite people to stand under the number that represents their rating. Or, obtain copies of the laminated 0-10 ruler from your HPDP staff for use in group.
- Establish ground rules.
 - Suggestions include:
 - Come to as many sessions as possible.
 - Start and end on time.
 - Participate a little each time.
 - Be honest/genuine.
 - Be respectful of others (just one person talking at a time, etc.).
 - Focus on process (not just outcome).
 - What goes on in the group stays in the group. Keep it confidential.
 - No texting or cellphone use in the group. Please silence phones.
- Remember to try to engage all participants.
- If possible, ask all scheduled speakers to attend session 1 for face-to-face introduction to Veteran participants.

- Post the ground rules weekly and review as needed.
- Introduce guest speakers, if applicable.
- Facilitate the group process (See: *A Guide to Good Facilitation* section, below).
- Encourage Veterans to share challenges and solutions – it is important to discuss progress, problem-solving, and goals so any issues or challenges can be addressed.
- Identify, teach, demonstrate, and model behaviors and skills, as appropriate.
- Help participants plan for self-monitoring, including creating SMART goals and a realistic action plan.
- Encourage healthy rewards for achieving goals.
- Encourage questions; solicit thoughts, feelings, and opinions from participants.
- Encourage testimonials during the session: Ask the “big loser of the week” to share success strategies – maybe how they avoided food temptations or how they increased their activity. Usually “big losers” are very good about planning activity and it gives others in the room a realistic idea of exactly what it takes to be successful. Few Veterans “crave” physical activity; unless planned, it won’t happen by accident.
- Write major points on a whiteboard/blackboard/smartboard.
- Summarize key points frequently.
- Keep discussion focused to stay on track with objectives.
- Consider assessing Veteran understanding in a variety of ways, including an oral quiz or simple written quiz. Make it a game: Name two teams, have Veterans pick healthy or unhealthy foods, and see who can generate the longest list.
- Consider obtaining feedback from the Veterans about their satisfaction with the group series.

Key Points to Consider at Every Session

- Group participants are more engaged and successful when content is presented in a non-lecture mode; **always strive to create an interactive, engaging group environment.**
- Focus on facilitating the session so the balance of talking comes more from the participants and less from the leader.
- Encourage attendance at all 16 sessions since participants who attend more sessions lose more weight.
- Research has shown that individuals striving to lose weight are more successful when they use a diary or log to document food intake and physical activity. Determine how you will use the daily food and physical activity diaries at each session. Will you collect and review each one at every session or review and discuss as a group? You may want to ask participants to review prior weeks as part of planning and problem-solving. Be flexible – some may choose to use electronic tracking.
- Research has shown that attendance is better when a physical activity break is included in each group session.

MOVE!® Group Sessions

The following MOVE!® Group Sessions have been developed to help you in your role as leader and facilitator. Suggested handouts, worksheets, and additional materials are listed within each group session. The complete list of MOVE!® handouts is located at <http://vaww.move.med.va.gov/handouts.asp>.

Facilitator/Coach Guidelines

- **Session #1:** Ready, Set, Goals
- **Session #2:** Eat Wisely to Tip the Balance
- **Session #3:** Be Active to Tip the Balance
- **Session #4:** Take Charge of your Weight
- **Session #5:** Go Good Fat
- **Session #6:** Get Fit for Life
- **Session #7:** Manage Stress and Handle Hunger
- **Session #8:** Dine Out Successfully
- **Session #9:** Fine Tune Your Physical Activity
- **Session #10:** Overcome Weight Plateaus
- **Session #11:** Finesse Your Food
- **Session #12:** Pump Up Your Physical Activity
- **Session #13:** Dust Yourself Off
- **Session #14:** Keep It Positive
- **Session #15:** Conquer Triggers and Cues
- **Session #16:** Maintain Your Momentum

A Guide to Good Facilitation

Adapted with permission from: Facilitating Meetings: A Guide for Community Planning Groups, Academy for Educational Development Center for Community-Based Health Strategies

Good coaches possess a variety of qualities and skills. Some of the qualities spring from such innate personality traits as being able to recognize one's own biases while remaining neutral, enjoying interaction with diverse groups, and inspiring trust. Although some people possess a natural talent for facilitation, most develop the skills through practice and with guidance from experienced facilitators. Skills include:

- Making everyone feel comfortable and valued
- Encouraging participation and idea exchange
- Preventing and managing conflict
- Listening and observing

Make everyone feel comfortable and valued:

Most people will not participate fully in a group unless they feel comfortable with other members and believe their opinions will be heard. You, with members' support, must create an environment in which members value the potential contributions of those with different perspectives.

- **Use body language:** You send messages with your movements as well as your voice, so be aware of what your body language is saying. By using body language to show warmth and acceptance, you encourage others to relax and respond in kind.
- **Welcome participants:** Take a few moments to welcome participants. If possible, greeting each member by name makes the experience more personal and can foster a stronger connection to the group and coach. Full participation is vital because each person brings a different perspective that can contribute to the group's success.
- **Introduce participants and yourself:** Introductions help participants feel welcome and comfortable with the other group members. Introductions also give you an opportunity to clarify your role as facilitator/coach. Ask everyone to say a few words, even if only, "My name is" Once people have heard their voices in a large group, they feel more inclined to speak up again later. If you have limited time or numerous attendees, find ways to ensure that introductions are brief (name tags may be helpful).
- **Consider an icebreaker:** You may ask people to share their favorite sports team, their first pet's name, or anything else light and personal, but non-threatening, as they introduce themselves.
- **Thank participants:** By thanking participants, you validate and legitimize their comments and contributions.
- **Provide affirmations:** This will help encourage and support Veterans' efforts.

Encourage participation and an active exchange of ideas:

Some members are outspoken and energetic. Others are quiet and reserved. As facilitator, you should balance these extremes so that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate.

- **Encourage silent members:** If members are silent or disengaged, catch their eye or ask them to share their experience.
- **Use open-ended questions:** Ask questions people can't answer with a *yes* or *no*. Questions beginning with *when*, *what*, or *how* usually encourage members to provide detailed answers, which can spark additional ideas from other members.
- **Consult the group:** When a participant addresses a question to you, prompt participation from others by consulting the group. This is also an effective technique for shifting the focus of discussion from one member to the whole group.
- **Use visual aids:** Some people process information better if they see it, so write it on a flipchart, whiteboard, handouts, etc.
- **Avoid falling into the habit of making suggestions and offering advice.** Instead, try asking the group what worked for them, what they have tried, and what they think would be helpful.

Be careful when using “why?”: “Why” can imply judgment and cause some participants to become defensive. Instead of using “why,” ask, “What are some of the reasons...?”

Prevent and manage conflict:

One of the best ways to deal with conflict is to prevent it, but some conflict is inevitable and even helpful to the process. Use it to develop options the group would not have considered otherwise.

- **Use team-building activities:** Help members get to know each other better.
- **Set ground rules:** Group member agreement on rules makes your job easier when conflict arises. Basic ground rules may be that the group will hear and respond with respect to all comments.
- **Search for agreement:** Drawing attention to points that participants agree upon helps create an atmosphere of positive collaboration and forward momentum.
- **Agree to disagree:** Although you would like to resolve all conflicts, you may not be able to. Urge the group to treat each other with respect even when they disagree.

Listen and observe:

Throughout a group session, keep your eyes and ears open and stay tuned in to the group. Pay attention not only to the group as a whole but also to individuals.

- **Listen actively:** Apply the basic skills of one-on-one conversation. Truly listen before speaking.
- **Scan the room:** While maintaining eye contact with the speaker, note how other members are responding to that person.
- **Allow discussion, but help the group stay on topic:** Sometimes participants will bring up a good question, but it will not be relevant to the topic of discussion. Acknowledge that it is a good question, while keeping the group on topic.
- **Create a “parking lot”:** On the board, write “Parking Lot,” and write the participant’s question under that. Tell the participant that it is a good question, and you are putting it in the parking lot, to get to after discussing the current topic.
- **At the end of the session (or after, depending on time) return to the parking lot topics:** Provide examples of what some facilities are doing for follow-up. Some facilities have monthly follow-up groups on various days and times. Other facilities utilize Veteran buddies.